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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the activities of a project that provided proposal development training for educators from three of Virginia's black colleges. The program is described as an attempt to maximize educational research proposal development skills by providing participants with information regarding funding agencies and their priorities, the funding proposal review process, and development of proposal documents. Three phases of the training are discussed: a workshop which emphasized the development, packaging, and targeting of proposals: the establishment of contact between participants and funding agencies: and a simulated proposal submission session. (APM)

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Interinstitutional Program for Proposal Development

A Paper Prepared for the
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ABSTRACT

The activities during the training program are organized around three primary phases with an individual consultation option to participants after Phases II and III. The emphasis of the Phase I Program includes exposing participants to a six day intensive residential workshop which will emphasize the development, packaging, and targeting of proposals for specific sources of funding. This phase will be conducted during the fall semester of the 1980-81 academic year. The primary mode of instruction will utilize a mix of lecture and small group interaction sessions. Participants will receive 4½ hours of structured presentation daily during the six day period. The didactic presentations will be followed by a minimum of two hours of group discussion devoted to clarifying issues addressed during the formal lecture. Expanded discussion of issues will be diverted to these small group interaction sessions. During the training, participants will have an opportunity to analyze RFP's, solicited announcements and guidelines will be given considerable attention. Furthermore, the development of statements of work and agency funding priorities will be discussed in great detail. Specifically, during this initial training period participants will be exposed to the curriculum as outlined in the matric (Vector I x Vector II).

Obviously, employing full time professors of higher education from predominantly Black universities to take up a research methodology manual and produce relevant research fundable proposals is no simple task. But I feel that the process worked at Hampton Institute, Norfolk State University, Elizabeth City State University and Saint Paul's College. The first full test of the Interinstitutional Program for Proposal Development - a training model - occurred in the summer of 1971, held at the Moton Conference Center in Capahosic, Virginia. Research issues were generated and delineated upon which an inquiry could address two areas of substantive foci:

- providing for the acquisition of specific skills needed for the development and packaging of research proposals.
- increasing the presence of women and minority persons in the formal and informal communications and sponsorship networks through introduction to some of the major funding agencies, their practices, and timetables.

Thus, our objectives are:

- to identify and describe the active public and private markets for educational research development activities.
- to appreciably enhance the technical research proposal packaging skills of fifteen post-doctorate participants.

There is considerable debate in educational circles about the impact of short-term training programs. One of the major

constraints surrounding specific short-term training programs is the lack of adequate follow-up consultation with participants. Based on evaluation of previous efforts aimed at increasing minority participation in educational research and development activities, these programs have only a limited impact. Workshop participants seem to gain more when there is a continuous and systematic follow-up over time, and evaluation feedback of their subsequent activities.

In an attempt to avoid falling into this syndrome, the following training cycle was divided into three phases which span a total of fifteen months:

PHASE I

Proposal Development Training - July 1979

The initial phase of the training exposed participants to a six-day, intensive residential workshop which emphasized the development, packaging, and targeting of proposals for specific sources of funding. This phase was conducted during the summer of 1979. The primary mode of instruction utilized a mixture of lectures and small group interaction sessions. Participants were exposed to a total of four and one-half hours of lectures daily. This was followed by a minimum of two hours of group discussion devoted to clarifying issues addressed during the formal lecture periods. Expanded discussion of issues were diverted to these small group interaction sessions. During the training, participants had an opportunity to analyze RFP's, solicited announcements and guidelines with considerable attention placed on the statements of work and the agency funding priorities.

Specifically, during the first three days, markets for educational research and development were identified and described. A matrix of specific information related to educational R & D markets was discussed. The matrix was comprised of Vector I which included the identification and description of both federal government agencies, typical research needs of state and local agencies, quasi-public and private foundations, corporations, and legislative mandates of federal agencies. Vector II included information on the organizational structure, budgeting and funding procedures, research and development foci, current agency emphasis, current key personalities within agencies, timetables or time frames for proposal submission, technical sources of information, sources of technical assistance, and current networks.

On the final day of Phase I, each participant was given a copy of the criteria that the reviewers used in evaluating his/her individual proposal.

PHASE II

Agency Contact - December 1979

At the beginning of the proposal season, December 1979, the participants assembled in Washington, D.C. During the first two days of this three-day experience, participants engaged in a series of formal agency presentations. Participating agencies included Research Grant Administrators from the National Institute of Education, National Institute of Mental Health, Office of Education, Office of Child Development, the National Science Foundation, and others. They presented an agency profile as well as information related to funding

priorities and program priority areas. The second and third days were devoted to following-up on individual contact efforts. Participants made independent field visits to selected agencies during this time. Pre-arranged agency appointments further assisted project participants to further identify the educational R & D market place.

PHASE III

Simulated Proposal Submission - March 1980

The third phase of the training began in early March 1980, in Capahcsic, Virginia and concentrated on a simulated proposal submission session. The professional reviewers were in residence three days to consult with participants about the strengths and weaknesses of their individual proposals. Each of the four reviewers was responsible for preparing written critiques which detail points for elaboration, clarification, or improvement by the participants.

ROLE OF ADVISORY BOARD

A group of six distinguished educators agreed to serve on an Advisory Board. The Board members represented the three institutions.

The Board provided their professional expertise by reviewing the materials and screening applicants. Additionally, their input was solicited to:

- refine participant selection criteria and process,
- review proposed seminar topics,
- provide guidance and serve as resource persons, and
- provide formative evaluations for program modifi-

cations and/or improvements.

PARTICIPATION SELECTION

In an effort to recruit faculty for participation, one major criteria was that faculty express a strong research motivation. The selection criteria also looked favorably upon those faculty participants who have been unsuccessful at gaining funding for a research project. Such data can be used as a baseline for monitoring project effectiveness. Furthermore, to increase the potential impact of this project, the recruitment and selection process was assigned more valence or weight to applicants who were currently involved in either training or supervising graduate students. The underlying assumption here was that some graduate students will become socialized to the research proposal writing experience and consequently become more active in research and related activities upon graduation.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Three Project Co-Directors coordinated all of the planning, training, and evaluation activities and were responsible for making all the arrangements for direction and coordination of the project. The co-directors functioned as liaison persons between the project and Advisory Board and the funding agency.

SUMMARY

In summary, the specific purpose of this project involved providing training for three of Virginia's minority institutions. The training placed emphasis on maximizing the participants proposal development skills. In general, the purpose of the project was to assist participants in understanding the

funding agency and its priorities, understanding the proposal review process and evaluation criteria used, and developing a well constructed and carefully articulated and persuasive proposal document.

The concepts used in this project are viable prototypes for increasing minority and women participation in educational research. The funding of other projects which employ as a major strategy of enhancing proposal packaging skills among advanced level minority and women professionals is worthy of NIE's continued support.